





LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS





The care & treatment of the insane poor. By C. L. Robertson M.D.	1
Agricultural Progress. Drainage. By James Sanderson	2
Immigration. By Rev Charles Gibson	3
The Pollution of Rivers	4
Friendly Societies versus Beerhouse Slabs. By Rev J. H. Stratton	5
Deaf not Dumb. By B. St. J. Rekers	6
Vocal Speech for the Dumb. By B. St. J. Rekers	7
How infection is spread through the Sweating System	8
Intemperance	9
Letters on Oyster Fisheries. By W. Dell Woods	10
The Coffee Public House	11
The Ch of England Temperance Society & the <sup>Recent</sup> General Elections By Canon Ellison	12
The Ethics of Urban Sanholders	13
Thrift. By Charles Roundell M.P.	14
Trades Unions. By Robert Johnson	15
To the Agriculturists of England	16
At night in a Hospital. By E. Lyman Linton	17
Tramps & Vagrants. By Sir Charles Trevelyan	18
Maintenance of Main Roads. By W. Harcourt M.P.	19
Infection. By Sir J. Clarke Ferriar & Miss Highetynale	20
Local Option - Local Control. By Canon Ellison	21



*John Galt*  
HOW CONTAGION AND INFECTION  
*May 1877*  
ARE SPREAD, THROUGH THE

# SWEATING SYSTEM

IN THE

## TAILORING TRADE:

BEING A REPORT

OF A

## CONFERENCE OF TRADES UNIONISTS

OF SOUTH LANCASHIRE,

HELD IN THE

COTTON WASTE DEALERS' EXCHANGE, MANCHESTER,

ON FEBRUARY 24th, 1877;

AND REPORT OF DEPUTATION THAT WAITED ON THE HOME SECRETARY ON THE SUBJECT,

COMPILED FROM REPORT OF INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE.

BY PETER SHORROCKS.

MANCHESTER:

CO-OPERATIVE PRINTING SOCIETY, 17, BALLOON STREET, CORPORATION STREET.

1877.







THE FOLLOWING PAPER WAS READ AT THE OPENING OF THE  
CONFERENCE ON THIS QUESTION:—

## THE SWEATING SYSTEM.

---

I HAVE no doubt many people at the present time wonder what is the meaning of the term "sweating," as applied to the tailoring trade; and I do not presume to lay down the following as the only reason why such a term is applied to the system on which certain branches of trade conduct their business. About the close of the last century and beginning of the present, it was found that people placed gold coins in a bag, and by turning them backwards and forwards for a considerable time, a gold dust remained behind, as the result of friction produced by the coins rubbing against each other. This was sold at a profit by those practising the system, which was termed "sweating;" it was afterwards made illegal. The persons found guilty of this practice chiefly belonged to the Hebrew race.

About the same period, a transition was taking place in the payment of wages of the journeyman tailor, from weekly wages to piecework; and being a trade which did not require much inconvenience in carrying the work from one place to another, and which work could be done almost wherever the workman could find sitting and elbow room, and also being one in which wife and family could assist, it led to a class of men (who neglected work at the beginning of the week) taking work home with them to do during the night and morning intervening between the workshop being closed and opened next day. These men worked principally for the lowest class trades, and for employers who entered into the business for the purpose of making money, at any cost; they (the employers), finding that they had this class of men continually in their power, by advancing such sums of money as met their convenience, they suggested that it would be more to the men's advantage to take work home altogether, and both themselves and families could make the work; but they would not pay the same price for such work as to those working in the shop. The men themselves, in many instances, being in debt to the employer, and not being able to appear in decent dress amongst other workmen in the shop, greedily accepted the position, not thinking that it would lead to their own degradation and also that of their families.

Seeing that greater profits were made, and with a view to underselling other tradesmen with whom they were in competition, and finding that not only were the rents of workrooms saved, but the expense of fire and light also, these tradesmen became anxious to carry out the system still further. Men were induced to open rooms in their homes as workshops, take in work, and employ those whom they could get within their power through their own debauchery, at a still lower rate than that paid by the master tailors; and by this means enable themselves to live without manual labour on the money thus *sweated*, or drawn from the wages of the men whom they employed.

It will be easily seen that this system would lead to unhealthy competition: one middleman against another, or one man who took work home for himself and family against the middleman, and *vice versa*. Hence various practices were adopted by the middlemen to keep those under them in their power, such as the continual supply of drink, and other means which are always at command over the needy, thus still further reducing the wages paid to their dupes. The term "sweating" was used as an expression of contempt for those persons who obtained their income by sweating the wages of those under them in this manner.

The system has made such great strides since first introduced that women and also children of tender years are extensively employed or used to compete, not only against men, but against each other. The utmost degradation has been found to exist amongst those who are victims to this practice; their hours of labour are unlimited and irregular; night-work and Sunday-work are prevalent wherever it is found; therefore, as it has been found necessary to apply legislation to factories and workshops, we claim, in the cause of humanity, that legislation shall also be applied wherever this system is found to exist.

A scene in one of these sweating dens is described by the late Canon Kingsley, in his "Autobiography of Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet," in chapter 21, called "The Sweaters' Den;" but although this took place more than thirty years since, such scenes may not only be witnessed at this day in every district of the metropolis, but also in Manchester, Liverpool, Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, Bristol, Southampton, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Bath, Windsor, Oxford, Cambridge, and in all the large towns of the United Kingdom. To the workpeople themselves it is most degrading, for the whole family of the man engaged in this work is brought in to work for wages that should be earned by the man himself. Little rest is known to them, and youth is turned into premature decay in this competition to live; in numerous cases female virtue is sacrificed in order to induce those giving out the work to favour the particular party whom the female may represent. Advertisements may be seen often in the West End of London for good-looking females with pleasing manners, to take work to and from fashionable tailoring establishments. Cases of this nature have been exposed in the Manchester courts within

recent years. If all the tales could be told of social degradation brought about by this most degrading system, the best feelings of our nature would rise in revolt against it. I do not affirm that all connected with out-working in the tailoring trade are in this position. Some very respectable men work at home, whose places are a credit to themselves, and these places may be pointed out by those who encourage this system as showing that we overstate our case; but the majority are not so creditable, whilst large numbers are in the state described. I can point out the workshop of a sweater in the West End of London who works for one of the best firms in the kingdom, whose place is cleaner and healthier than the regular workshops of the firm; and those engaged with customers, when inquiries are made as to where the work is done, often point with pride to the place, and invite inspection. They never tell that this is only one isolated spot that they can point to; but I can as confidently state that against this one home of the sweater, I can point out more than a score of others working for the same firm whose homes it would be sickening to visit, and still more saddening to make inquiries respecting the condition of life of the workers, even though some of them present a respectable appearance when waiting for work. The head officials of the firm in question would not themselves visit these places. It is not many weeks since that a coat was altered in one of the workshops that had been made outside that shop, and which brought into the shop that most deadly and sickening malady—smallpox. It was found to have been made in the home of a workman, where one of his family was afflicted with the disease. The coat was burnt in the stove, and all the workmen in that shop were submitted to vaccination, and at this moment many are off work until the inflammation on their arms has subsided. There are large numbers of the most fashionable establishments everywhere pursuing this abominable system of sweating, and God only knows the amount of social degradation, disease, and death that is spread into every grade of society by this most pernicious practice. The thoughtful, whose desire is to improve the condition of humanity, will do well to inquire into the subject. There is ample field for the labours of those who desire to benefit our species, and are in a proper position to do so.

The question is one not only affecting our tenderest feelings, but it is one that also affects the very safety of our health and lives. The story of a late great statesman's daughter being stricken with contagion and carried off in early life, through wearing a new-riding habit, made in one of those places, unknown to the loving heart making such a present on the anniversary of her birthday, has been well known now for years. We know not how disease is spread and contagion conveyed about; but after carefully considering the whole question, several medical gentlemen in Liverpool signed a declaration that nothing was so well calculated to spread disease as woollen garments that had been in close proximity to disease, and further investigations declare it to be dangerous that such garments should be made at the homes of operatives. We know that

there is scarcely a home of a working man with children that disease and sickness do not sometimes enter, such as measles, whooping cough, scarlatina, many kinds of infectious fevers, and in some cases that deadly malady the smallpox; therefore it is as necessary we should be as careful to provide against the spread of disease as we are that it shall not be generated by foul atmosphere or adulterated food. It becomes a subject of self-protection that we should know where our clothes are made; and in the present age it devolves upon the tradesman to find healthy, clean, and well-ventilated workshops for his workpeople. The security of the public demands that such should be the case; and we find that recently, cases have come to light in connection with the tailoring trade that prove there is danger imminent and terrible in turning the home of the worker into his workshop. The *Lancet*, *Sanitary Record*, *Globe*, *Truth*, *Despatch*, and many other newspapers of authority, have repeatedly shown up cases where this system seriously affects our well-being; but it will be seen from the following facts that not only does this system affect those engaged in it, but the general public also, as it creates a medium whereby contagious diseases are conveyed to them. Hence the imperative necessity that a clause should be inserted in some Act of Parliament which bears upon this question providing for the inspection of all such places. In support of such a proposition we submit the following facts:—

Dr. Farr, in a letter to the Registrar-General for England, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of 14th October, 1872, says:—"The subtle death germs are spread in a thousand ways. It is, when all is said and done, safer upon the whole to play with the deadly cobra than to touch a rag from the body of a scarlatina patient."

Dr. Littlejohn, of Edinburgh, while on oath as a witness in a case before the Court of Session, in December, 1872, stated that "He considered the sweating system as very likely to spread contagion as woollen garments retained the germs of infection much longer than any other cloth material. He had no hesitation in saying that this system was dangerous to the community."

Dr. O'Leary, of Dublin, M.P. for Drogheda, in a lecture delivered by him in the Mechanics' Institute of that city, on 11th October, 1872, denounced the system known as sweating among tailors as one productive of disease, immorality, and death. By its agency smallpox had, during the recent epidemic, gained access to the homes of the wealthy. He stated that in these sweating houses children infected with smallpox had been actually wrapped in the clothes that were a few hours afterwards sent home to gentlemen.

The *Lancet's* Special Sanitary Commissioner, in his report of the 29th January, 1876, alludes to the danger of the spread of epidemic disease by journeymen tailors, needlewomen, &c. He says, "The greater part of the making up of clothes is done at the homes of the workpeople, and not only are these homes often abominably unclean and unhealthy, but work



is often carried on in them when some of the inmates are suffering from scarlet fever or some other contagious disease."

The following report of Dr. Thorne Thorne appeared on the 17th March, 1877, in the *Hampshire Telegraph* and *Sussex Chronicle*, in respect to the sanitary condition of Portsmouth, and more especially to the two following cases, viz.:—

"In the overcrowded house of a tailor and dealer in second-hand clothing a child was attacked with scarlet fever. Isolation was impossible, and a second child was attacked, one case terminating fatally."

"At the house of another tailor, where several cases occurred, I ascertained that at the date of the outbreak the mother divided her time between nursing her sick children and the manufacture of articles of clothing."

"Many more recent cases are cited in illustration of the danger. In Soho a dressmaker's daughter was recently taken ill with scarlet fever, and lay for a week in a room, where twelve seamstresses were at work all day. She had hardly reached the convalescent state before her mother, in turn, caught the disease. When the medical gentleman arrived he found the girl up, trying to direct the work, and actually handling the dresses, while her mother lay stricken by her side."

"In Marylebone a child recently died of scarlet fever in the room in which his father and mother were working at tailoring."

"Close by a couple were found by the medical attendant busily engaged on a hunting coat, while two of their children, lying in the same room, were suffering from scarlet fever."

"We are told of a bootmaker, living in one room, stitching at boots for the Duchess of Edinburgh, by the bedside of his dying wife."

"It will be remembered that the death of Sir Robert Peel's daughter was traced to the tailors who made her riding-habit in the same room with a fever patient, and Dr. Richardson stated in his recent speech that he had seen a riding-habit thrown over the bed to cover a person suffering from the same contagious disease."

Dr. Royle, who presided at the conference on the subject in Manchester, said he knew and had seen the terrible effects of the evil complained of. Ladies and gentlemen did not know that when they ordered garments to be made in haste, in which they wanted to appear at some ball, or concert, or party, that they not only ran a risk themselves, but carried the same risk to those they held most dear as friends and relatives, by wearing clothes made at firms patronising this system. For himself, he never wore new clothes until they had been hung for some time in a room through which a current of air was passing, and the garments were thoroughly ventilated.

The following is an extract from the *Sanitary Record*, of October, 1874 :—

#### THE PROPAGATION OF SCARLET FEVER.

Dr. Page points out one fruitful source of contagion :—“ In the course of a recent inquiry into the prevalence of scarlet fever in a village, at one house he found a man, a tailor by trade, engaged at his work, while his two children, convalescent from scarlet fever, from whose hands and bodies the skin was abundantly coming off in flakes, were sitting in the same room, and in actual contact with the apparel lying around him.” It is not possible to conceive a more certain means than this of infecting clothes, by which the poison might be carried afterwards to any distance and retained for any length of time. It is probable that many of these outbreaks of infectious diseases in distant and isolated houses, the explanation of which is a puzzle to everyone, may owe their causation to similar sources of infection.—*The Sanitary Record*.

#### “HOW DISEASE IS SPREAD.

“ At the Sheffield Police Court yesterday, Hannah Turner, living at Chapeltown, was summoned for not taking proper precautions against the spread of infection. The defendant is a seamstress, and on the 21st of September a dress was sent to her to be mended by a woman named Kneeshaw. At this time the defendant had a child ill of scarlatina. The dress was returned on the 29th of the same month. Soon after, four of Mrs. Kneeshaw’s children became ill of scarlatina, and two of them died. It was proved that the disease had been transmitted with the dress. As the defendant was ignorant of the law, a fine of 1s. and costs only was imposed.”—*Manchester Guardian*, December 2nd, 1874.

On a recent occasion the following letter appeared in the *Lancet* :—

“ We have within the last few months given many illustrations of the perils which beset the public by reason of the careless system of giving out work indiscriminately, which obtains in certain trades. What are known as the ‘sweating’ and ‘home-work’ systems among tailors are pregnant with danger to the general health, and it would be interesting to know, even approximately, how many cases of smallpox in the present epidemic depended on the reception in the house of clothes which had been made in infected rooms, or by persons barely convalescent from the disease. The natural remedy for such a state of things would be for tradespeople to provide workrooms in which all their orders for wearing apparel would be executed, and where the hands employed would be under inspection. Failing this it might be possible to effect an extension of the Workshops Act. Any way, the duty devolves on tradesmen at the present time of exercising a careful supervision over making clothes. A medical man writes to us this week to state that a short time back he had under his care several severe cases of scarlet

fever in the families of working tailors, principally Germans, in the purlieus of Soho, at whose homes the work was carried on as usual. In one case a young man sat on the 'board' making a vest and trousers while in the highly-dangerous period of the disease known as desquamation, or 'peeling.' There were also in the same room two persons with symptoms of the malady. 'This family,' writes our correspondent, 'like many others in the neighbourhood whom I attended, did work for the leading tailors and clothiers in the neighbourhood of Regent Street and the West End.'"

The following is an extract from an article in the publication called *Truth* on the subject:—

"And surely our readers will admit that five guineas seem a great deal to have to pay for a coat that will kill, and that 40s. are too much for a death-warrant in the shape of a pair of trousers. We invite the public to turn the matter over in their minds. It is well worthy of consideration. Many firms charge fancy prices; is it too much to ask that they should take ordinary care? Is it too much to require that they should provide better workshops, or exercise some supervision over the hands they employ, and the places in which they allow their work to be done? If they refuse to do this; if they are supinely content to cast their cut-out cloth upon the slums of London, and have it returned to them after many days made up into garments reeking with they care not what deadly and loathsome disorder, would it not be wise for us to go elsewhere for our clothes, and order our coats and trousers from those firms which get their work done in the purer air and in their own workshops, where some sort of caution and inspection are practised? Is it not better to see to these things ourselves, than to risk being carried off in the bloom of one's manhood by scarlet fever or smallpox? The present and most nefarious practice of the majority of firms is this. They take your measure, they cut your coat, and then they give it to be made up to any poor wretch who can sew well—and who is honest. Whence he comes and whither he goes when he leaves the shop, what his circumstances are, among whom and what sort of people he lives, of all this they know nothing and care less. All they do care for is that he shall bring the work back at the proper time, done after a business-like fashion. They, of course, never think of asking him how he is, or how his wife and children are, or whether he and his family inhabit a room which contains another family or two attacked by various kinds of infectious diseases. They take a purely commercial view of the matter, and acting upon the most approved principles of political economy, as they are careful to sell in the very dearest, so they take pains to buy in the very cheapest market they can find. And if the market in which they buy happens to be not merely cheap but nasty, what care they? They make a good profit, and the lives of their workers enter not into their thoughts. They are intent on making money, no matter who suffers."



The evils of the system have been allowed to grow far too long to be rooted out in a moment. The voice of reason and humanity has been overwhelmed by the inordinate ravings of capital in its anxiety to secure more than its fair share.

The following is from the *Echo*:—

“HARD FACTS IN THE HISTORY OF LABOUR.

“If one-half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives, it is not because they are not told. Last week the tailors were laying their grievances before the Home Secretary, and informed the world generally how terribly they are dominated by that potent ruler of the world yecept ‘Backsheesh.’ The tailors have doubtless a just cause of complaint, and unlike many others connected with the organisation of labour, it probably more closely concerns wearers of clothes than the makers of them. We, of course, refer to the ‘sweating system.’ The kernel of the abuse can go into a very small nutshell. Messrs. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ‘General Outfitters,’ find it necessary, in order to get large profits and yet supply cheap coats, to make the public pay on one hand and their workmen on the other. ‘Devil's dust’ and ‘shoddy’ allow a considerable margin for gain to the seller, but to keep a well-ventilated workshop which will pass muster with the Inspector of Factories is not by any means so pleasing a duty. Accordingly, they settle the matter by not keeping a workroom at all. They resort to this ‘sweating system.’ They give their clothes out to be made at the lowest contract prices by the journeymen tailors at their own houses. The masters neither inquire nor care, nor do their customers know though they do care, while the workmen are not likely to tell, whether contagious disease was raging in the workman's house at the time the clothes were being sewn by the tailor and his family. As a matter of fact, frequently the coat which the dandy is to wear has been made in a miserable den up a court where half the children sleeping in the room which is at once workshop, bedroom, kitchen, and dining-room, are ill with smallpox or fever. In this manner there cannot be doubt, as shown by a case which we mentioned on Saturday, but that epidemics are spread in spite of the vigilance of the Health Officers and the authorities generally. It admits of a very simple but radical cure—which is all the better, in so far that it is one suggested by the workmen themselves—viz., that every house in which work of this kind is carried out be licensed as a factory, and subjected to inspection. This would soon bring the masters to their senses. It would compel them to have workshops where, in their own interests, the other workmen would see that no one would be admitted who, either by reason of disease in himself or in his family, was capable of spreading contagion. It is scandalous that, simply to make greater profits for wealthy tailors, the public should be subjected to the risk of disease over the spread of which they have no control; while, on the other hand, the miserable prices which the masters are thus enabled to pay the workmen throw the latter, on the slightest trade

reverse, on the rates. Mr. Cross has promised to consider the matter, and, as far as may be, to try and introduce a remedy for this very just grievance into the Factory and Workshop Bill which he will introduce in the course of the Session. We can imagine no question on which the influence of the Trade Unions could be better brought to bear, nor one in which they would receive the more unanimous support of the outside public."

The Amalgamated Society of Tailors has been sneered at by journals circulating in the cutting-rooms of those interested in continuing this system, and our efforts termed extraordinary philanthropy; but to show that it is a subject in which the funds of the Society are used to alleviate the evils complained of, I may state that the last conference of the trade instructed the Executive Council to grant support to any member in whose family contagion was found, in order that he might leave work until his home was disinfected, and a clean bill of health was given by a medical gentleman. We state this to show that whilst our object is to elevate the condition of the operatives connected with our trade, our funds are used to prevent the spread of contagion by our members. We doubt whether the proprietors of these journals do likewise in the interest of the public.

---

## REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE OF THE MANCHESTER BRANCH AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF TAILORS.

It will be readily seen that the obstacles thrown in the way of a full investigation into such a system as sweating or out-working by workmen, without legal authority to prosecute their labours, are many, and in some cases insurmountable; and that though we may be able to fully substantiate the following, yet to give numbers of the houses and names of occupiers would render the committee liable to both civil and criminal proceedings; and from the same cause we are compelled to withhold many facts that came to our knowledge, which, if recorded, would shock the better feelings of our nature, and leave the uninitiated to wonder could such things exist in this enlightened age. It must be clearly understood that we had not the means of ascertaining *how many* women and children were employed, for though blank we are fully persuaded that by far the greater majority employed both.

The committee was composed of six, appointed by a general meeting, and their labours commenced on February 19th, and closed on the 24th; it will therefore be seen that they could not visit all the places and homes engaged in this class of work, but can vouch for the truth of the following statements, and are prepared to prove their correctness. The number of children could not be ascertained.

*Tabulated Report of the Streets Visited and number of Men and Women Employed, with remarks on their appearance.*

OLDHAM ROAD, ROCHDALE ROAD, AND RED BANK DISTRICT, COMPRISING

	Number of men employed in houses visited.	Number of women and girls employed in houses visited.	REMARKS.
Turner Street.....	2	2	One house was found where father, mother, stepson, and 5 other squalid-looking children were engaged at work in a garret, in such a state that it is calculated to generate disease. One man and family respectable; the others very untidy, and some may be termed pestilential. The personal appearance of a large number of those employed was slovenly and dirty in the extreme, and such as would appear liable to sickness. The condition of many of the houses was such as is calculated to breed distempers through foul smells and want of cleanliness. Though we saw many instances of sickness even amongst those at work, and in the houses visited, yet when we inquired what were the nature of their complaints, it was generally stated asthma, consumption, bronchitis, or rheumatism; we felt that in some cases the real illness was withheld, as there appeared a general reluctance to state the complaints; in one instance we were asked if the inspectors had sent us. We could see consumption breathed into the garments being made up by some of the workers, whose appearance it was pitiable to witness, and in some cases by both women and children. In many places, we have no hesitation in saying the atmosphere was pestilential.
Sudell Street.....	2	2	
Stonehewer Street.....	3	..	
Lord Street.....	6	..	
Marshall Street.....	9	..	
Haddington Street.....	15	..	
Chadderton Street.....	1	..	
Goulden Street.....	4	..	
Cross Street.....	1	1	
Hanover Street.....	7	..	
Oswald Street.....	8	..	
Miller Street.....	12	9	
Balloon Street.....	6	58	
Back Balloon Street.....	8	5	
Holgate Street.....	1	1	
Back Holgate Street.....	2	3	
Thomson Street.....	4	11	
Foundry Street.....	1	3	
Pump Street.....	3	4	
Nelson Street.....	2	2	
Pilling Street.....	1	1	
Little Pilling Street.....	3	2	
Railway Stores.....	25	8	
Fountain Street.....	1	..	
Husband Street.....	..	4	
Chillingham Street.....	1	..	
Hannah Street.....	1	..	
Teignmouth Street.....	2	2	
Briddon Street.....	..	1	
Shudehill.....	33	..	
Thornley Brow.....	..	..	
Dantzic Street.....	4	20	
Hargreaves Street.....	2	..	
Ashley Lane.....	3	3	
Crown Lane.....	2	1	
Timber Street.....	..	3	
Angel Street.....	7	15	
Mount Street.....	1	1	
Simpson Street.....	1	1	
Dyche Street.....	1	1	
Simeon Street.....	1	1	
Dewhurst Street.....	1	..	
Back George's Road.....	5	6	
Twemlow Street.....	1	1	
Nelson Street.....	2	2	
Horne Street.....	1	3	
	196	177	

## DEANSGATE AND GAYTHORN DISTRICT, COMPRISING

	Number of men employed in houses visited.	Number of women and girls employed in houses visited.	REMARKS.
Gaythorn Street .....	2	1	Many of the houses in this district have a most dilapidated appearance, both inside and out, as if they are to be pulled down. It will be a blessing if many of the homes we visited are removed to some healthier locality, and work is done in proper workshops provided by the employers; for if the state of things we witnessed is continued in other parts of the town, the condition of the workers will not be improved, but danger of contagion will be spread to those localities. We saw several instances of sickness in the same rooms where work was pursued. In some cases one room had to serve a family as workshop, sleeping-room, and all other conveniences necessary to a house; young women sleeping in the rooms whilst work was pursued.
Bridgewater Street .....	3	2	
Quay Street .....	1	..	
Byrom Street .....	6	..	
Hope Street .....	1	..	
Water Street .....	4	2	
Back Water Street .....	1	..	
Gartside Street .....	4	2	
Wilmot Street .....	5	1	
Irwell Street .....	1	1	
Young Street .....	4	4	
Irving Street .....	2	2	
Dolefield .....	4	2	
Longworth Street .....	1	2	
Hardman Street .....	2	1	
Royton Street .....	2	..	
Wood Street .....	3	..	
Gregson Street .....	1	1	
Bradley Court .....	5	2	
Garden Court .....	1	..	
Charles Street .....	1	..	
Great John Street .....	2	1	
Harrison's Court .....	1	1	
Grindrod Street .....	2	..	
	59	25	

## STRANGWAYS DISTRICT, COMPRISING

Morton Street .....	27	10	One man, employing 13 men and 5 women, states that he turns out 120 suits in one week, which must entail night and day work, also Sunday labour, on those working for him. The places are in general dirty and neglected. One in Julia Street is a factory: women employed as far as can be; houses and persons present a neglected appearance. Men only are employed in one place, but they take work to employ women at their homes to avoid the operation of the Factory Act, and they work with them at night. The condition of these homes is deplorable, and they need inspection in the interest of the public as well as of the people themselves.
Mary Street .....	15	5	
George Street .....	3	1	
Nightingale Street .....	2	1	
Dutton Street .....	4	130	
Julia Street .....	30	..	
Hornby Street .....	2	1	
Berkeley Street .....	1	..	
Carnarvon Street .....	2	..	
Robert Street .....	5	1	
Pimblett Street .....	6	1	
	97	150	

## LONDON ROAD (RIGHT HAND SIDE), COMPRISING

	Number of men employed in houses visited.	Number of women and girls employed in houses visited.	REMARKS.
Medlock Street .....	7	1	Some of the places visited in these districts are in a miserable condition; the position of many of the workers is saddening to think of, as existing in so rich and prosperous a city as Manchester, and in close proximity to the homes of workmen in other branches of industry whose hours of labour are regulated; both men and women work from 16 to 20 hours per day, the Sabbath included, for less money than their neighbours for 9 or 10 hours per day.
Cambridge Street .....	5	..	
Granby Row .....	3	..	
Stanhope Court .....	1	1	
Holgate Street .....	1	..	
Pump Street .....	1	..	
Hulme .....	..	..	
Dale Street .....	1	1	
Kennington Street .....	2	1	
Stott Street .....	1	4	
Boundary Lane .....	1	4	
Ruby Street .....	1	1	
City Road .....	6	3	
York Street .....	3	..	
Rutland Street .....	1	1	
Duke Street .....	4	1	
	38	18	

## ANCOATS AND ARDWICK, COMPRISING

Jersey Street .....	4	6	In most of these places sewing machines are used by women. The houses did not, in some instances, present the squalid appearance of those seen in other places; yet the effect of long hours is seen even in these homes, and the weary and jaded appearance of the workers reminds us of Thomas Hood's "Song of the Shirt." Although machines are used, it is evident they are a source of profit to the employers, to the injury of the workers. Some of the homes are miserable.
Cotton Street .....	1	1	
Bloss Street .....	2	1	
Murray Street .....	1	1	
Edward Street .....	3	3	
Watmough Street .....	1	1	
Canal Street .....	3	3	
Alum Street .....	3	2	
Grey Street .....	1	1	
Long Street .....	2	1	
Park Street .....	..	1	
Heyrod Street .....	..	2	
Walker Street .....	..	2	
Buxton Street .....	2	1	
Boardman Street .....	3	1	
Berry Street .....	1	1	
Till Street .....	1	1	
Dean Place .....	1	1	
	29	30	



## RIGHT HAND SIDE OF OLDHAM ROAD AND ANCOATS, COMPRISING

	Number of men employed in houses visited.	Number of women and girls employed in houses visited.	REMARKS.
Lever Street .....	1	1	Some of the houses are damp, and some squalid in appearance. Rheumatism was complained of by both males and females, therefore it will be seen that the time when this complaint is not felt is almost wholly devoted to work. Neglect of cleanliness of both home and person induces vermin, of which we saw several sickening instances, which must in some cases adhere to the clothes being made up.
Ancoats Street .....	8	4	
A Court off Ancoats Street ..	1	1	
Port Street .....	5	2	
Dean Street .....	1	1	
Ducie Street .....	1	2	
Mill Street .....	1	1	
Primrose Street .....	1	1	
Henry Street .....	7	6	
George Leigh Street .....	5	3	
Lorn Street .....	1	1	
Court off Henry Street .....	4	1	
Parker Street .....	1	1	
Silk Street .....	9	3	
Prussia Street .....	1	1	
	47	29	

## CHORLTON-ON-MEDLOCK AND HYDE ROAD DISTRICT, COMPRISING

Harris Court, Richmond St..	2	1	A portion of these are amongst the homes of respectable working-men; but some of the places that were visited need inspection, in the interest of their neighbours. The condition of the workers was wretched. In one case the person resorted to the system of pawning one portion of the work whilst finishing the other; the consequence can be better imagined than described.
Richmond Street .....	2	3	
Lindle Street .....	1	1	
Wood Street .....	1	1	
Faust Street .....	..	..	
Duke Street .....	1	1	
Brunswick Street .....	2	1	
Cranworth Street .....	4	1	
Stockport Road .....	4	12	
Higher Temple Street .....	27	5	
Brook Street .....	4	..	
Grosvenor Street .....	3	..	
Edward Street .....	5	..	
Charlotte Street .....	1	..	
Hope Street .....	1	..	
Hyde Road .....	13	..	
Ashton Road .....	11	..	
Cross Street .....	3	1	
Vernon Street .....	2	2	
Tipping Street .....	2	1	
Chapel Street .....	5	2	
Union Street .....	2	1	
	89	33	

## HULME, CHESTER AND STRETTFORD ROADS DISTRICT, COMPRISING

	Number of men employed in houses visited.	Number of women and girls employed in houses visited.	REMARKS.
Stretford Road .....	9	1	Some of these places are work-shops belonging to employers; others are what are known as Scotch or Drapers' trades, whose work is done by a class of middlemen; whilst a few are out-workers. The work-shops are of the usual sort. Although people live on the premises where work is performed, cleanliness is not a noticeable feature. The fact of people sleeping by night and working by day in the same room gives them a tired and worn-out appearance, even in their youth.
Preston Street .....	5	..	
Moss Lane .....	1	..	
Maple Street .....	3	..	
Clayton Street .....	1	..	
Warde Street .....	1	..	
Clopton Street .....	2	..	
Frederick Street .....	1	..	
Daisy Street .....	1	1	
Newcastle Street .....	1	1	
Abbey Street .....	3	10	
	28	13	

## CHEETHAM DISTRICT, COMPRISING

Johnson Street .....	39	8	The houses occupied by this class of workers are generally dirty, unhealthy, and not properly ventilated. The closets are not consistent with proper sanitary requirements. The above, taken in conjunction with people working in the apartments by day and sleeping in the same at night, is calculated to generate pulmonary diseases and infectious fevers.
Crown Lane .....	2	..	
Back Verdon Street .....	3	5	
Little Fernie Street .....	22	5	
Park Street .....	7	3	
Oldham Street .....	7	3	
Davison Street .....	5	5	
Winter Street .....	6	..	
Lord Street .....	5	1	
Bank Street .....	5	1	
	101	31	

## BROUGHTON LANE DISTRICT, COMPRISING

Broughton Road .....	1	1	Generally clean, though some untidy in their persons. Even in this district evidence is shown that workshops should be provided for the proper manipulation of the work.
Hough Lane .....	4	1	
Edith Lane .....	1	..	
Sussex Street .....	1	3	
Gordon Street .....	1	1	
Caroline Street .....	1	..	
Clarence Street .....	..	2	
Edward Street .....	2	..	
	11	8	



## SALFORD, GREENGATE, AND CHAPEL STREET DISTRICT, COMPRISING

	Number of men employed in houses visited.	Number of women and girls employed in houses visited.	REMARKS.
Boardman Place .....	1	..	Two of the houses of these people are what may be termed "moderate," but the majority are dirty and neglected, and calculated to generate contagion and induce pulmonary diseases. The class of work done in these houses is for the best firms in the trade, and requires care in getting up; but we saw people afflicted with cutaneous diseases, and other complaints which would be conveyed to the garments, to the imminent peril of the persons wearing them. In one place we saw vermin on the material as it was being made up.
Norton Street .....	1	1	
Gravel Lane .....	5	..	
Sandywell .....	1	1	
Hornby Street .....	1	1	
Boundary Street .....	5	2	
East York Street .....	1	3	
Paradise Square.....	2	2	
Beech Street .....	2	2	
East Robert Street .....	1	..	
Berry Street .....	1	1	
Waterloo Place .....	2	2	
King Street .....	5	2	
Ravald Street.....	5	2	
Arlington Street .....	2	2	
Briggs Street .....	2	2	
Brewery Street .....	1	1	
Victoria Street .....	1	1	
Market Street .....	1	1	
West Market Street .....	1	1	
Mount Street .....	1	1	
Dearden Street .....	1	1	
Brunswick Street .....	..	1	
Courts off Brunswick Street..	6	2	
Frederick Street .....	1	1	
Rigby Street .....	1	..	
Thomas Street .....	1	1	
Ford Street.....	1	1	
Off Rolla Street.....	..	1	
Golden Lane .....	3	2	
Pollard Street .....	2	1	
Booth Street .....	1	1	
Barlow Croft .....	1	..	
Appleby Croft .....	1	..	
Spaw Street .....	1	1	
Chapel Street.....	5	1	
Egerton Street .....	1	..	
George Street.....	1	1	
Irwell Square.....	1	..	
Park Street.....	1	1	
Islington Street.....	1	1	
Barrow Street .....	2	..	
West Street .....	1	1	
Mew .....	1	..	
Pembroke Street .....	1	..	
Garden Court.....	1	..	
	77	46	

## PENDLETON, SALFORD, AND REGENT ROAD DISTRICT, COMPRISING

	Number of men employed in houses visited.	Number of women and girls employed in houses visited.	REMARKS.
Broad Street .....	2	..	There is little to notice in this district different from the others. Most of the houses visited are what are termed single houses; their appearance showing neglect, especially the children. We heard of contagion being in the neighbourhood; and from what we saw of women visiting each other's houses, contagion might be spread without thought of such thing by those who might be the means of doing so.
Church Street .....	2	..	
Lissledale Street .....	1	2	
Whit Lane .....	1	2	
Cross Lane .....	1	..	
Ellor Street .....	2	1	
Liverpool Street .....	..	..	
Regent Road .....	4	..	
York Street .....	5	..	
Bedford Street .....	3	4	
Adelaide Street .....	2	1	
Jackson Street .....	6	4	
Pond Place.....	2	..	
Bridgewater Street .....	7	1	
	38	15	

The places actually visited are where 1,329 men, women, and girls work, the time was the slackest in the year for the tailoring trade, and the work being hurried we could not visit all the places in the same street which were engaged in this class of work. There were certain factories employing from 80 to 100 hands not visited. We estimate that there are about 3,000 people engaged in the trade in Manchester, and that only about 1,000 work in shops provided by their employers. We have given an account in the margin of each district visited. In this we cannot depict the disgust we experienced in some of the places. In one street in the Red Bank district the expression used by ourselves was that it was "horrible." Clothes were being made for both retail and wholesale houses. In the places we visited there was not, as far as we saw, any cases of contagion, but we heard of such in several neighbourhoods. The general condition of the workers is deplorable; on all sides is seen the result of constant dreary work, with small pay. In one house, an emaciated man and woman and consumptive lad were at work late at night. In the intensity of feeling, one of the committee exclaimed, as he was leaving, "Oh! for the genius of a Hood, who could sing the song of a thousand suits, and move the hearts of the wearers to think of the responsibility of patronising firms that resort to such a practice." The system is not only deterrent to the healthiness and progress of those engaged in it, but also to the general position of the operative in shops. The work done at these houses is paid less for than in the workshop; hence there are few employers who do not resort to it. There are not above six firms in Manchester who have all their work done in proper workshops. Thus the condition of the operative tailor is far worse than that of other workmen. When less price is paid for work done at home, the man is obliged to bring in the assistance of his wife and family—hence it is not to be wondered at that homes become neglected, and epidemic diseases attack such homes as described in our report. The committee, in describing their mission, begin by stating that knowledge is power, and the fact became patent that as workmen they were not able to earn a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, according to the generally recognised notions of experienced tradesmen. The knowledge that they were losing the power of providing decently for themselves and families made it incumbent on their society to ascertain the extent to which the system of sending work to the homes of the operatives had extended, and also to gain a knowledge of the aspect of the question so far as it affected the public generally; and with the feeling that in the question of out-

working lay the secret of the inferior social position of the journeyman tailor as compared with other workmen, they state that they were enabled only to furnish a mere skeleton description of the subject as it exists, but from this statement of their investigations the readers of this pamphlet must themselves form an opinion of what really does exist. In many cases the sights that they saw were merely the remains of many human forms, physically dry, shrunk, and in premature age, shaken by the winds of adversity, and the blasts of avaricious employers. In some cases their moral and spiritual condition was a disgrace to the age, and prevented them from going into proper workshops. The curse of man is verily fulfilled by this class of operatives—"By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." If there is a scheme of redemption for fallen man in his spiritual state, it is necessary that the condition of his life should be to enable him to appreciate and value the promises of a redeeming Saviour. The system here described in this pamphlet shows man as doubly fallen, and needs the conscientious assistance of the public in giving their orders to tradesmen only who provide proper workshops for their operatives.

We appeal to the public, in their own interest, and for the welfare of those employed in this industry, to endeavour to prevent the spread of contagion, by patronising only such firms as keep their workshops on the premises clean and healthy, to ensure the safety of their customers, their workmen, and the public at large.

To publish a list of firms resorting to the abominable practice of giving work out might entail legal proceedings, but the committee are prepared to furnish information to anyone who may ask for it, as to firms who do not resort to this practice.

## REPORTS FROM OTHER TOWNS.

We have reports from several towns on the system.

### BIRMINGHAM.

The Trades' Council in this town have issued a special report, showing the evils attendant on the system. The report proves that this evil is as extensive there as in other places. The following extract is taken from the report:—

"Your committee, desirous not to appear amongst the alarmist sections of social or sanitary inquirers, have felt disposed to moderate some of the extremes put before them, and have taken the system as a whole rather than individual cases.

"Finding the case stand thus, the question arises, What are the remedies? and in this your committee are not unmindful of the responsibility that rests upon them. Having taken the trouble to inquire what has been done, they have also turned their attention to what might have been done in the past, and to what may be done in the future. It is a question that involves many points, and the application of measures that to some will appear most objectionable, but which under the scrutiny of calm reasoning may be divested of all their worst features, and without which no true remedy can be found. One great difficulty that presents itself to your committee is the fact that laws, already in existence and provided long ago for the purpose of improving the bad condition of our workshop system, were for years allowed to remain a dead letter, while if they had been applied must at least have modified in some degree the evils that are inseparable from the present system. It is a matter for deep regret that the corporate authorities of this borough, with their great power and desire for sanitary reformation, should have lost sight of or neglected to bring into use the instruments that were then placed in their hands, and so powerful to produce good results. The difficulties in the way of carrying out the provisions of the Workshops Regulation Act were known to be many; but if an honest and determined attempt had been made to put it in force, its insufficiency to meet the case would have been made more clear, and such modifications sought as would have brought it into harmony with the Factory Acts, which have become more appreciated by both employer and employed; or they might have been condensed into one measure generally applicable to all premises where manufacturing is carried on, and administered without increasing our burdens. It

is only in such laws and their proper administration that a safe remedy is to be found. Your committee are of opinion—That it should be a duty upon all manufacturers to find workshop accommodation for those they employ, whether the number be many or few. That any part or parts of a dwelling house so occupied should be considered a factory, and should be so registered for the purposes of any Act of Parliament made to apply to their supervision, and that all rules and acts made for the inspection and regulation of factories and workshops should be applied equally in all cases."

#### NOTTINGHAM.

The following extract is from the *Nottingham and Midland Counties' Daily Express*, February 24th, 1877 :—

"NOTTINGHAM TRADES' COUNCIL.—The adjourned meeting of this body was held on Tuesday night, Mr. Coyne presiding. The minutes of the previous meeting having been adopted, the committee gave in their report on the 'sweating' system in the tailoring and bootmaking trades as follows :—' Your committee think the report would be incomplete without giving the facts which led to the inquiry. We think their reproduction as part of the report will make the Council see the need for some steps being taken to lessen the consequences of this thirst for profit, which has tempted employers of labour to let off rooms for the sake of a money benefit, while they drive their workpeople to labour in places already over-crowded by the presence of numerous offspring for which the poor worker cannot find sufficient room. [The report here alluded to cases of fever resulting from the sweating system, mentioned in the resolutions brought before the Trades Union Congress held in Glasgow and Newcastle, which have already been published by us.] Your committee are bound to state that in this, as in all other old towns, there are places which are not fit for human habitations, but in which the poor are forced to reside; and many operatives of the tailoring and bootmaking trades may be seen taking home work from the different business places of the town to these miserable 'dens,' which, as residences, only germinate epidemics which undermine the health of all who are forced to reside there. And when we think of these places being made the workshops for tailoring and bootmaking purposes, we are, to use the mildest expression, seriously pained. We have not a word to say against the steady, honest man who tries to get a business together by setting off a part of his house for a workroom, though we think that even in such a case there should be a regular inspection under the Workshops Regulation Act. We think the tailors and their customers should pay this matter more attention than they have hitherto done, from the fact that only one house in the trade has all the work done on the premises. Three first-class tailoring establishments in the town have entirely closed their workrooms during the last eighteen months, and now employ none but out-workers, and the other first-class houses all more or less work by this system. Of the second-class shops your committee find only two where the work is done on the premises. The co-operative store, which we thought would be found all right, has lately adopted the 'sweating' system in their tailoring business, thus coming down to the level of all the others of this class, who employ 'sweaters' only. We are strongly of opinion that public attention has only to be drawn to so great an evil to obtain a remedy, and we think the best remedy is to put under the Workshops Act the whole of the places where any sort of manufacturing industry is carried on. This, with a thorough inspection, according to such a law (if it were not allowed to become a dead letter) would soon make the trades of tailoring and bootmaking better for the workers and for the customers. The Tailors' Society are about to hold a conference in London shortly, and we hope they will be able to make an impression on the Home Office in reference to this question. Your committee adopt the paper circulated by the Scottish tailors, as best calculated to show the dangers to be apprehended from the indiscriminate adoption of the 'sweating' principle, in which we think the cheapening process is carried too far.' This report was, after an animated discussion, adopted by the Council; and a resolution was agreed to that the borough members should be written to on the subject, and asked to support a measure which would bring the places where work is carried on under the Workshops Act."



## LIVERPOOL.

A committee has made inquiries into the work of the sweating system in this town, and the report shows the deplorable state of the persons and homes of the workers. It is saddening to reflect that the wholesale houses in Liverpool, Manchester, London, and all towns where this class of trade is made up, export contagion, disease, and death in the bales of goods packed for shipment to be sold in other lands. God only knows where the limit of this "upas" deleterious influence is felt, unknown to the wearers of the clothing, which brings to them secretions in its folds most poisonous to life, and in its most loathsome forms. We have traced the subject, as affecting humanity, from the peer to the peasant. The investigations in Liverpool fully prove the extent of the system, and bring to one's mind the illness of the Prince of Wales some few years since, said to have been caused by defective drainage in Scarborough; but the inquiries into the working of the system here would lead us to think that the complaint had been carried from the home of the out-worker in the clothes of acquaintances or attendants with whom he came in contact. The system, with all its attendant evils, has been fully shown in these inquiries.

## SOUTHAMPTON.

The report from this place begins by stating that the journeymen tailors have waited and hoped many years for some amelioration in their condition, and are now encouraged in their hope when they hear of the question of the evils of the sweating system receiving public consideration. The duty of exposing it is a difficult one, not only from the listless apathy of the operatives engaged in it, but from the opposition of those interested. The harbour is the largest mail packet station in the world; the population is about 60,000, and work is made for gentlemen travelling to all parts of the globe; yet there are not thirty men employed in workshops provided by the masters. Hundreds work at home under the same conditions as depicted in other places; the middleman, or master sweater, employing men at his home at from 17s. to £1 per week, women and girls from 1s. per day and upwards; these work together in some cases with the man's family, in bedrooms and other rooms of the house. The manner in which work is sent entails night and day work, and often Sunday labour, on all. Proper rest, health, and strength are sacrificed to the god Mammon and to the moral degradation of those engaged. The committee know of many cases of neglect of sanitary rules, and disease has been engendered, and whole families have suffered from scarlet fever and other infectious diseases; yet work was pursued in the house during the whole of the time persons were afflicted, and garments were made for customers of the most respectable houses in the trade. The committee further state the system of both sexes working together in such places, and that the conduct and conversation of men, women, and girls is such as to raise a blush on the cheek of the most callous persons; the small wages paid to females and the levity of conduct lead many further into vice, to eke out a living and provide dress to appear in the streets.

## PORTSMOUTH AND DISTRICT, CHATHAM AND WOOLWICH.

We class these together because army and navy clothing is made there. The two extracts given from the report of Dr. Thorne, and the knowledge that at the present moment there is a very serious outbreak of fever and disease in the borough of Portsmouth, which has been going on for some time, led a member of Parliament to put the following question to the President of the Local Government Board:—"Whether, considering the representations that have already been made to the Government in respect to cases of this kind, it will order an inquiry to be made into the danger that exists for the spread of contagious diseases by allowing tailors to manufacture clothing in their private dwellings?" The answer was most unsatisfactory, merely stating that hospital accommodation was being provided for the isolation of these cases. Medical gentlemen from the other towns waited on

the member of Parliament in person, and others wrote letters, entreating of him not to let the subject rest, for, from their knowledge, diseases were disseminated both in the army and navy by this abominable system.

Tunbridge Wells, Derby, Hull, Oxford, Cambridge, and towns both in North and South Wales; Dublin, Belfast, Londonderry, and other towns in Ireland; Edinburgh and Glasgow, in Scotland, all bear testimony to the evils of this system, which can be remedied as follows:—"That it should be a duty upon all manufacturers to find workshop accommodation for those they employ, whether the number be many or few." "That any part or parts of a dwelling-house so occupied should be considered a factory, and should be so registered for the purposes of any Act of Parliament made to apply to their supervision, and that all Rules and Acts made for the inspection and regulation of factories and workshops should be applied equally in all cases."

The arguments against these propositions cannot outweigh the cause of humanity, but it is the duty of the public themselves, in their own interest, to see that they give their orders only to those who provide workshops. The work is one in which all should share and take an interest. The minister may preach, the philanthropist may plead, the philosopher may point out the path to higher and nobler aims in life, but so long as the home of the artisan is turned into a workshop for the manufacturer—so long as "man's inhumanity to man" requires the life of his fellow-creatures to be sweated out by excessive hours of toil in a poisoned atmosphere—so long will the comfort and pleasure that should adorn the poor man's home be banished hence, and our youth and manhood will seek elsewhere—in the song-room or the pot-house, or still lower regions—a substitute that may sink them still deeper into the gulf of misery which others have assisted to prepare for them.

# THE SWEATING SYSTEM.

## DEPUTATION TO THE HOME SECRETARY.

On the afternoon of Friday, March 16th, a deputation, composed of representatives from the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and the National Tailors' Associations of Scotland, waited upon Mr. Cross, at the Home Office, for the purpose of urging upon the Government the urgent necessity for legislation in regard to what is known as the "sweating system," *i.e.*, the giving out of work by all tailoring establishments, including even the large ones, for execution at the homes of the journeymen tailors.

Mr. Macdonald, M.P., and Mr. Blake, M.P., introduced the deputation. With Mr. Cross was Mr. Redgrave, Inspector of Factories. The vice-president, treasurer, and secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, accompanied the deputation, which included Mr. A. W. Bailey, President of the Amalgamated Society; Mr. P. Shorrocks, General Secretary; Mr. H. Wright, Mr. H. Harry, Mr. D. Stainsby, Mr. L. Drohan, Mr. J. McWhinnie, Donald McAllan, John Skimmings, George M. Benbow, William Blake, Thomas Wells, Patrick Hooban, Michael O'Loughlan, and A. J. Holian.

Mr. MACDONALD, M.P., introducing the deputation, said: Sir, I have the honour of introducing to you a body of gentlemen from the Amalgamated Tailors of the United Kingdom. They represent 335 branches and over 300 towns in England, Ireland, and Wales. There are also here representatives from the tailors of Scotland—the appointed deputies of associations representing nearly every town in Scotland. The object that they have in view is to lay before you some facts connected with what is called the "sweating system," and they do so in the hope that you will be able to take into consideration that matter in your proposed bill on the Consolidation of the Factory and Workshop Act. It is not for me to know what the provisions of that bill are, or whether this subject lies within the four corners or lines of that bill, but I would say this, that it is a subject that for many years to my knowledge has engaged the especial and earnest attention of the Tailors of the United Kingdom. It has not only engaged their attention, but it has engaged the attention of a number of other earnest thinkers and workers in the cause of sanitary reform, and whether or not you will be able to deal with the subject in your Consolidated Act, I trust, sir, that you will be able to consider it, and not only consider, but deal with it in the manner in which you have dealt with quite a number of subjects in connection with social and sanitary reform since you came into office, and with which your name will long be associated. It would be imprudent as well as impolitic to detain you with any remarks of mine. Gentlemen are here who are enabled and entitled to speak on the subject with far greater force than I can lay claim to. Without further preface, therefore, I will call upon Mr. Bailey to state his views.



Mr. BAILEY, of Preston, said: Sir, I address you as the President of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, in application with the associations of Scotland. We are aware that this is both a difficult and delicate matter for any Minister of State to deal with, and we are also well aware that the rights of a citizen are to be considered and respected, but at the same time we think, that where it can be proved that a number of people living in small rooms are engaged in this work, under conditions physically and morally of a deplorable nature, some steps should be taken by which either sanitary inspectors, or inspectors under the Factory and Workshop Act, should be able to inquire into and remedy this state of things. We are well aware that this is now becoming an important question, and we trust that when the facts and figures are laid before you they will convince you that it is a question which requires the serious consideration of those friends who are so anxious for the sanitary and social condition of this country.

Mr. WRIGHT, of Glasgow, said: I beg, sir, to endorse all that has been said as to the extent of this evil. In Scotland, for a great number of years past, we have carefully considered this question, and at every meeting of our association it has been brought under discussion. Nor have we lost any opportunity of calling the attention of the public to this matter, for it is the general body of the community who should complain of a system by which everything of a contagious character existing in the rooms of the sweaters is conveyed to the homes of the customers. I might state a great number of cases from my own personal experience, in which I have actually seen the garments in the course of making up covering the beds in which fever patients lay. These are facts which have come under my own observation; and though we have informed the sanitary inspectors of the evil, with a view of its remedy, we have failed to obtain their interference. Therefore, our opinion is, that if an employer should please to give his workmen the work to take home, he should be bound to make provision by which that home should be registered; and we have simply to ask if you can see your way to introduce some clause in the bill you contemplate bringing forward by which it may be compulsory upon an employer to register any house or shop in which his work is done. We do not think it is right to interfere in the way in which the work is done, but that it is only for the Government to see that their inspectors have power to prevent the spread of contagion. At all events, the fact of a contagious disease being in the house of a workman might be made known, and then the public could defend themselves. I may mention one or two other cases. I visited a house in Glasgow where, in a room some 6 feet by 8 feet, a man and his wife and boy lived and worked. Just before I came the mother and child had been removed to a fever hospital, and there had been nothing to cover the boy but the clothes on which the father was engaged. Then, in another house I visited, I went into the attic, which was divided in two by a screen. In one division there was no furniture; this was a sort of workshop and kitchen, the other was the sleeping apartment, and here a man and his wife and two sons lived. Now, we

believe that such a state of things not only tends to injure the public generally, but it also tends very much to lower the morality of a people; and we humbly suggest that if you can see your way to introduce any clause in that bill, you will take whatever steps in your wisdom seems best to place these homes and workshops under the inspection of Government officials.

Mr. H. HARRY, of Manchester, said: Sir, I hold in my hand a tabulated statement and report of the committee which was appointed last year in Manchester to ascertain the facts relating to this sweating system. We visited over a thousand houses where this work is done, and the condition of the people and their dwellings was something horrible. The average size of the rooms was 9 by 12 feet, and in these four to five persons lived, making these garments in the midst of all the domestic arrangements, half-naked children, and surrounded by filth and wretchedness. I can assure you that, speaking from the facts and circumstances which came under our observation in the course of that inquiry, it seems quite within the scope of the Workshops Act that governmental interference should take place. We found somewhere near 1,300 people engaged in this kind of work, so that if any disease existed among them there was the liability if not certainty of its being spread from those homes among the enormous number of people in whose midst these clothes came. Moreover, we think that, in particular, attention should be called to the fact that all the circumstances surrounding the places in which the sweaters work are such as to foster and spread disease, the situation of the places likewise facilitating the spread of disease to a fearful extent.

Mr. D. STAINSBY, of London, said: Sir, I shall speak more particularly of workshops in which this system of sweating is carried on, situated in Regent Street, or rather in streets lying immediately at the back of Regent Street, such as Carnaby Street, Cross Street, Broad Street, Edencourt, and others. These localities abound with places where the work from the principal West-end shops is executed; and these shops, I wish to give you to understand, are patronised by our aristocracy. In visiting these houses we found a man and his wife with male and female helps, all working together in one room, and in some cases there was a bed in the same room. In a place on the other side of Regent Street, in a court that abounds with tailors working in their own homes, I found in a top room, the roof of which was so low that the man had to stoop, a man and his wife both working at this trade in the direst misery. I may mention that the already existing appliances for the prevention of such evils as those we complain of are entirely inoperative as regards our workshops, and I may support that statement by citing a case that came under my personal knowledge, where a man, upon his return from the hospital, far from wholly recovered from smallpox, resumed his occupation of making up garments. I knew the man well. I shall never forget the sight he presented. A woman at the same time returned from the hospital to the same place. I am therefore able to say, from my own observation of this matter, that it is

highly necessary the Government should take it up, and do something for the benefit of all concerned.

Mr. DROHAN, of Liverpool, said : In the first place, I wish to state that in what I am about to say I am expressing not only my own opinions, but those of a very large number of my own trade, and also the views of the public press of various places as regards this question. I have just to reiterate, to a certain extent, what my friend from Manchester said. We in Liverpool had a somewhat similar inspection, in the course of which we visited 800 men and 200 women, employing 250 machines. Five cases are specially worthy of note, but I will just state two. In one case we found a man and his family and his assistants all working together in one room, about 10 feet by 8, as far as we could judge, situated in a very low and dirty locality. There were two rooms—one in which the family lived, the other the workroom. In one we found the man sitting in bed working at his occupation of sweater ; and there was a plank laid across from bedpost to bedpost on which the garments were laid. In another bed a child lay covered with the clothing on which the workers were engaged. There was also a machine in the room, so that the place being small there was scarcely room for the persons to stand or sit at the little table in the middle of the room. Another case which came under the notice of the deputation I may also mention. Here we found a man and wife, with two men and two women, working together. They had two machines, which took up the greater portion of the room ; indeed, so cramped were they for space, that while one man sat on the table, another sat underneath it, where he had scarcely any light, and the third sat on the hearthstone among the coal and cinders. In addition to these two cases, I may mention that we found in all 38 persons working in rooms and houses totally unfit for habitation by any human being, and surrounded by circumstances utterly degrading, physically and morally. We do hope, sir, you will be able to deal with this evil, for it is a very serious matter ; and although we have called attention to it in the public press, there have been no remedial steps whatever taken in regard to it.

Mr. J. McWHINNIE, of Edinburgh, said : Sir, I do not know that any of the previous speakers have impressed this important consideration upon you, that while the aristocratic and wealthy go to large, showy shops, with plate-glass fronts, and are there measured and try their clothes on, they do not know nor have they the least idea that the garments are actually made in the lowest, filthiest slums of the city, by which means diseases of all kinds are spread. Hence we contend for some reform taking place. We could quote cases by hundreds, but we want the assistance of the Government to trace these cases to their source for the purpose of exposing them. I will instance one. Two of my acquaintances were asked one Saturday night if they would go and assist in completing a big order for a large establishment in Edinburgh. Now, these two men had been drinking, and, therefore, it may be supposed they would not be over particular, yet the moment they entered the house they came out, for there was but one room in the

place, and on the table a child lay dead from smallpox. In the midst of it all the father and mother were at work on clothes certainly intended for people residing in the most fashionable quarters of the city. I did what I could in the matter. I obtained the assistance of two doctors, and we found, in addition to the dead child, two brothers ill with the smallpox. Now, we want the authority of an Act of Parliament in order to effectually trace these cases. We may see, as we sometimes do in the papers, "Mr. So-and-so is ill with fever—how he got it none can tell." But we could tell, sir; we can guess now with certainty, but we could tell positively if we had the means of probing the matter to the bottom. We know that garments are made up frequently in places rife with contagion, the clothes imbibe it, and the moment they become warm—that is breathed through, the wearer dancing, perhaps—they give out the infection. You may have your suspicions, and go and question the employer, but there inquiry stops at present. We therefore ask for legislative interference on this most vital question.

Mr. PETER SHORROCKS, of Manchester, General Secretary to the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, said: Sir, we feel that this question is not only a sanitary question, or a question affecting the physical condition of the people, but that it is also a moral question. I may tell you that we know as a fact that in rooms where 15 to 18 males and females are working together the most private arrangements are carried on as to sleeping and undressing in each other's presence whilst work is pursued, thus demoralising those affected. I have here two cases with reference to nine dwellings in Camden Court, in the city, containing twelve families each, and each family numbers from three to six members. The hours of labour range from 12 to 18 per day, and the places are in a most filthy state. Sir, such facts as these must show that the people need protection from themselves. The Factory and Workshops Act regulates to some extent the hours of labour in the places specified in the Act, but in the homes of the sweaters they extend to 16 or even 18 hours per day. Reports have frequently appeared in the papers calling attention to this gross evil, but without effect. I have here with me two such reports, one from the *Sanitary Record*, December 2, 1874, and another from the *Lancet* [extracts from which he read], both showing cases in which direct contagion has been carried from the operatives to the individuals that have to wear the garments. Since, sir, it was known that you had kindly consented to receive a deputation on this subject, I have had letters bearing directly upon the question from Windsor, Ashton, Wrexham, Carlisle, Dublin, Derby, Oxford, Cambridge, and many other towns, all giving illustrations of the deteriorating effects of the existing circumstances as regards our trade; and we think a clause might be inserted in your proposed bill for the consolidation and amendment of the Factory and Workshops Act that would meet the case. The operation of the Artisan's Dwelling Act do not touch the evil, while the sanitary inspectors will not visit these cases, and the officers under the Factory and Workshops Act are not able to interfere.

Mr. Cross said: Well, Mr. Macdonald, of course it will not do for



me at the present moment to state to this deputation or any deputation what are the provisions of the Bill which I propose shortly to bring before Parliament; though I am afraid that, owing to the state of public business, I shall not be able to introduce it before Easter. I am very glad to have heard all that you have had to say. I suppose I am to understand that your object in coming here to-day is simply this, namely, to impress upon me the fact that disease is propagated by persons working at this particular trade of making up clothes in houses in which there is contagious disease.

Mr. MACDONALD, M.P., replied: Yes, that is all, sir; it is not a trades question.

Mr. CROSS: I was merely asking for information. Now, how would you deal with such a case as this: suppose a working tailor, whose house was full of disease—would you let him work as usual in the workshop?

Mr. BAILEY: Oh, no.

Mr. McWHINNIE, of Edinburgh: If disease were to break out in his house, and it were known, he would be requested by both men and masters to leave the shop until a clean bill of health was received and his place disinfected.

Mr. CROSS: That is what I wanted to know. Then the object of your deputation to-day is this—that a workman, wherever he may be employed (whether in a workshop or in his own house), if he should be living with a wife or child suffering from a contagious disease, he should be prevented from spreading that disease.

Mr. WRIGHT (Glasgow): The same thing takes place in Glasgow.

Mr. MACDONALD: I have to thank you, sir, on behalf of the deputation, for your courtesy in receiving it, and listening to its representations. This is a subject I hope you will consider at some future time.

The deputation then withdrew.

Though the interview was of short duration, it was thought to be most satisfactory, and that good results must follow. Resolved:—That a vote of thanks is due and is hereby accorded to the deputation for their creditable efforts on the subject on which they were appointed.

Resolved:—That a vote of thanks is due and hereby tendered to the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee for their disinterested and successful efforts in bringing about the interview; and that we request their valuable assistance in the future in assisting us to bring the subject to a successful issue.

Resolved:—That the thanks of the Conference be tendered to Alexander Macdonald, Esq., M.P. for Stafford; and to Thomas Blake, Esq., M.P. for Leominster, for their kindly assistance in accompanying the deputation to the Home Office, and sympathy with us in our efforts for the benefit of our trade.













